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ABSTRACT

The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS), a government entity in the Philippines, is the focus of this paper. A historical overview of DECS, its structure, and the general goals for basic education for the year 2000 and beyond are offered. The issues that faced public education in the Philippines in 1997 are identified. Current projects in the Bureau of Elementary Education, Staff Development Division are delineated. The projects include: (1) Project BEST (Better English for Students and Teachers); (2) the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education; (3) the BEE Monitoring Project; and (4) the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). The paper concludes with a regional map of the Philippines, characteristics of a quality education, the structure of the system of education, and the daily schedule and the best training needs assessment. Contains two tables of data. (BT)

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CONCEPT PAPER

ISSUES IN BASIC EDUCATION: THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND SPORTS

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Fall1997

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CONCEPT PAPER

ISSUES IN BASIC EDUCATION
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND SPORTS

I. BACKGROUND

History

The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) has undergone a number of incarnations over its 130 year history, reflecting the values of the Spanish (1565-1898), American (1898-1942) and Japanese (1942-1946) colonists under which it served. Access to education for Filipinos was first established under the Spanish rule by the Educational Decree of 1863, which provided for one primary school for boys and one for girls in each town, under the auspices of the local municipal government. That same year, the Superior Commission of Primary Instruction was formed. Schooling was inadequate, controlled by the Jesuits and mandated the teaching of Spanish. During the first decade of American rule, a secularized and free public school system was established. In 1901, the centralized public school system was installed; the high school system began in 1902; and in 1908, the Philippine legislature created the University of the Philippines. The Commission was renamed the Department of Public Instruction. Under Japanese rule, education emphasized love of work and the dignity of labor, and the teaching of Tagalog, Philippine History, and Character Education was reserved for Filipinos. After Philippine independence in 1946, the Department of Public Instruction was reorganized a number of times until 1987 when the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports came into existence with Executive Order No. 117, which read as follows:

> The Department shall be primarily responsible for the formulation, planning, implementation and coordination of the policies, plans, programs, and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal education at all levels: elementary, secondary, higher, technical-vocational, non-formal, sports, and culture; supervise all educational institutions, both public and private; and provide for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the goals of national development.

In 1994, the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) was created, taking from the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports the responsibility for tertiary level education.

Structure

The DECS is organized into two main structural components: Central Office and field offices with regional sub-regional offices. The Central Office is located in Pasig City, Metro

Manila. To formulate policies, studies, and programs on curriculum development, The Central Office of DECS has four bureaus: Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE), Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE), Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE), and Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports (BPESS). Central Office also houses the School of the Future which will be discussed later in the paper. Within the Bureau of Elementary Education exist three divisions: Staff Development Division (SDD), Curriculum Development Division (CDD), and Special Education Division (SPED).

Among the other tasks of the Special Education Division are determining learning competencies for the gifted as well as learning competencies and teacher guides for the hearing and visually impaired. They also conduct teacher training for teachers of the hearing impaired.

The Curriculum Development Division is responsible for preparing learning competencies and developing instructional materials including textbooks for all levels and teacher guides..

The Staff Development Division of the Bureau of Elementary Education has a threefold commission: monitoring, training, and morale boosting. The bureau staff visit local and remote areas of the country monitoring instruction and the implementation of current projects, conduct training needs assessments and training programs, and are responsible for all special events held for DECS staff.

There are sixteen regional offices (See Appendix A), within which are one hundred thirty four provincial and city schools, divisions, and 2,128 school districts. DECS has the largest personnel of all government agencies with 481,358 teaching and non-teaching personnel, 342,824 in elementary education. This can be broken down as follows:

TABLE 1
BREAKDOWN OF ELEMENTARY LEVEL
PERSONNEL

TEACHERS	*OTHER TEACHING RELATED	ADMINISTRATION	TOTAL
309,218	20,572	13,034	342,824

* This figure include principals, head teachers, district and division supervisors, and guidance coordinators/counselors.

Goals

The goals for the improvement of basic education in the Philippines reflect their concern for a balance of academic and values education. The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports lists 8 main attributes of the desired output of the educational process: belief in God, love of country and people, pride in being Filipino and in one's culture and history, committed to conserving and developing the nation's resources, possessing indigenous and international values, proficient in both Filipino and English, creative and critical thinkers and lifelong learners, capable of coping with changes in the environment and with competition. They seek to ensure a "balanced development of the child in terms of modern skills, character formation and physical development, mastery of fundamental learning skills, and preparation for the tertiary level and the world of work (See Appendix B: Characteristics of a Quality Education)."

The following goals for the improvement of basic education in the Philippines have been identified for the year 2000 and beyond.

1. **Access to Schools and Survival Rate**

- Both normal and disadvantaged/handicapped students will have access to pre-school, elementary, and secondary education.
- All children will be in school and acquire the fundamental knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and values.
- The elementary level participation rate will raise from 97% in 1994 to 99% in 2001.
- The cohort survival rate for grades I-IV will increase from 66.5% in 1994 to 85% in the year 2005.

2. **Academic Achievement**

- By the year 2005, Filipino learners who have completed elementary education should be able to demonstrate competency in the core subjects of Filipino, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Values Education.
- Academic performance will improve to equip students with knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes that will make them productive, competitive, and fully empowered.
- The illiteracy rate will become statistically insignificant or non-existent.
- The literacy rate will improve from 93.4% in 1990 to 98% in the year 2000.
- The academic achievement level as measured by the NEAT will raise from 41.76% in

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1993 to 73.64% by 2005.

3. Curriculum Development

- Well thought out and relevant curriculum shall be provided to elementary mathematics and science.
- The curriculum for early childhood education shall conform with the principles and methodology of teaching and psychology suited to preschoolers.

4. Teacher Training

- Effective programs of recruiting employing, training, and recognizing good mathematics, and science teacher who can contribute significantly to the country's development shall be adopted and implemented.
- All science, mathematics, and English teachers will be trained by the year 2000.
- Every parent shall be the child's first teacher and devote time each day helping his/her preschool child to learn. Parents shall have access to training.
- Preschool teachers will be adequately trained.

5. Other Factors Affecting Academic Success

- Eighty eight percent of preschool classes will be equipped with adequate facilities, textbooks, references, and instructional materials.
- A textbook ratio of 1:1 for elementary level schools will be in place by 1998.
- The classroom backlog for elementary will be eliminated.
- Each child will receive the necessary nutrition and health care.

II. ISSUES FACING BASIC EDUCATION, 1997

The Philippine education system has the shortest number of years of schooling in the world. Currently children enter the first grade at age six, attend six years of elementary level, four years of secondary level, and four years of higher education (See Appendix C). Pre-school and kindergarten are optional. In contrast, the Philippines has the most ambitious curriculum of all the ASEAN countries, requiring more mathematics, science, and social studies in the first grade and HEKASI (Heograpiya, Kasaysayan at Sibika) in grade four. It is the only country in the world requiring science in the first grade. All schools maintain a bilingual curriculum, with reading, mathematics, and science taught in English (See Appendix C). In those districts where Filipino is not the native dialect, the students receive instruction in three languages.

There is a serious shortage of schools. As of 1996, 12,000 rural barangays out of 43,000 nationwide had no schools. In addition, approximately 43% of the nation's public schools are incomplete (i.e. they do not offer classes for the full six years). Similarly, there is a teacher shortage estimated at 8,036, a classroom shortage of 19,529 classrooms, and a current textbook ratio of 1 text for every 3 students nationwide with the shortage being as high as 1:5 in some areas of the country. The student to teacher ratio in many areas is 40:1 (36:1 is average, according to the performance indicators published by DECS). DECS estimated in 1994 that 15% of the potential student population of 10.2 million children were out of school.

Public spending on public education in 1997 was 3.1% of the Gross National Product (GNP), low compared to other ASEAN countries. The overall increase in the DECS budget, from 11% of the national budget in 1992 to 15% in 1997, was due largely to increases in the salaries of personnel. Salaries account for over 70% of education expenditures. Due to the recent Asian economic downturn, the DECS lost 25% of its budget in 1998.

The 1993 National Education Achievement Test (NEAT) scores indicated that only 41.76% of the students mastered the basic skills as defined by a score of 75% or higher on the 160-item test. This score continues to be of great concern to the university community as well as to the DECS staff. More recent scores, as published in the *National Report Card on Basic Education - June 1997*, show an increase in the scores in all areas in 1995: English (59.36%), Math (68.17%), Science (73.76%), and HEKASI (73.38%). Literacy is at an astounding 93% nationwide.

There is a need to increase efficiency. Curricular and administrative decisions originate in Central Office and are intended to be uniform nationwide. Because of the extreme diversity among the regions, these decisions do not meet the needs of the local schools. There is duplication among office staff, as educators taking on a number of roles. More decision making authority needs to be given to the local districts and schools.

The role of English in basic education continues to be a divisive issue nationwide among the general population, as well as within DECS and the university community. As stated,

English remains the medium on instruction in half of the elementary level curriculum throughout the country and the only medium of instruction in all subjects at the tertiary level. The concern has arisen that the children are not learning either Filipino or English proficiently, particularly in areas where Filipino is not the native dialect. The argument has taken on a strong nationalistic flavor, with Filipino-only proponents contending that now that they are independent of American rule, they concentrate on their native language--reserving English language study for those who are majoring in business or economics where English is the medium of discourse. Many in the field of education cite studies conducted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, among others, that assert that children learn the basic literacy and mathematical skills better in their native language. It is also contended that having Filipino the national medium of instruction would have a unifying effect on the nation.

The counter argument centers on the debate over which dialect should be considered the national dialect of the Philippines. Speakers of Cebuano, in particular, are concerned with Filipino being declared the national medium of instruction, contending that Filipino is not spoken by the majority of the population nationwide.

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III. CURRENT PROJECTS IN THE BUREAU OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION STAFF DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The Staff Development Division of the Bureau of Elementary Education at the Department of Education, Culture and Sports is currently undertaking four main projects: Project BEST, The Multigrade Program in Philippine Education, Monitoring Instruction in English, and the Third Elementary Education.

1. *Project BEST (Better English for Students and Teachers)* is the result of a training needs assessment (Appendix D) conducted by the SDD staff which indicated needs in the areas of developing English proficiency (i.e. grammar and usage, reading comprehension, study skills), the art of questioning, reading and language learning strategies (framing lessons, skill integration, class interaction), lesson delivery (interaction process, giving feedback), and attitudinal change. As a result of this assessment, the Staff Development Division is sponsoring a series of teacher training programs. During the summer of 1997, an American Fulbright scholar was invited to DECS to conduct training sessions on English pronunciation, computer literacy and the world wide web, and teaching writing in the early elementary grades to the DECS staff. This person also conducted workshops with teachers of grades one, two, and three on integrating writing and speaking into the curriculum. A nationwide training program on the teaching of reading and language is currently being developed in coordination with INNOTECH which will consist of audio-taped lessons accompanied by printed materials.

2. The *Multigrade Program in Philippine Education* was instituted as a means of addressing the school shortage in the Philippines. In SY 96-97 DECS employed 20,479 multigrade teachers throughout the country, the vast of majority of whom teach two-grade clusters. TABLE II contains the breakdown of the number of multigrade teachers by region. The Curriculum Development Division has realigned the minimum learning competencies for English to meet the special circumstances under which the multigrade classes operate, and has created sample lesson plans with summative tests for distribution. One of the tasks of the Staff Development Division during the summer of 1997 was to compile the results of a multi-grade class profile which collected data on the student population, absenteeism/drop rate, dialect usage, availability of material for teachers and students, parental and community involvement. SDD staff visit and observe the multi-grade classes yearly to assess the success of the program. In 1996, twelve multigrade demonstration schools were launched with the support of UNICEF in six of the 26 poorest provinces in the country. These schools (inspired by the Escuela Nueva Project in Colombia) will serve as centers of best practices in multigrade teaching and learning and have begun to implement decentralization projects (in relation to TEEP to be discussed later). The teachers have attended in-service training in multigrade teaching and school management and will in turn train teachers from other priority provinces.

3. The *BEE Monitoring Project* is the responsibility of the SDD of BEE and their chief monitoring project is the multi-grade classroom. The main monitoring tool, in addition to periodic observations, included the MSAP (Monitoring, Supervision, and Assistance Program)

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questionnaire used by every division within the Bureau to determine needs in monograde, multi-grade and special education (SPED) classes. The program aims to gather data on the status of implementation of policies, programs, and projects; determine the teachers' classroom practices and problems related to instructional management provision and utilization of instructional materials, and provide technical assistance and supervision services related to instructional management. In 1997, twelve regions were monitored which included within each region, one central, one non-central school which may be multi-grade, and one school where the project of the region was based. These regional reports were submitted, analyzed and synthesized by the BEE staff and yielded the following findings: Most school buildings were found to be in good condition; some schools had enough desks and materials; most classrooms had updated displays even if makeshift; there was evidence of community support in terms of fencing and financial assistance. Recommendations included a reiteration of the need for training of multi-grade teachers, more technical assistance in planning and delivering lessons, reiteration of bilingual policy in areas where teachers were translating lessons into three languages (Filipino, English, and local dialect).

4. *The Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP)* was instituted to provide greater access to education to students in the 26 poorest provinces. This is a 7-year project funded in cooperation with the World Bank, the Overseas Economic Fund (OECF), UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and others. The TEEP is a continuation of two earlier projects, the Program for Decentralized Education (PRODED) of the 1980's and the Second Elementary Education Project (SEEP) of the early 1990's. The main difference lies in the extent of the devolution of decision making authority at the local level. Under the Division Elementary Education Development Plan (DEDP), the school division (including parents, communities, and local officials) will identify local action plans regarding school building, textbook and instructional materials, implementation of pedagogical decentralization, and project financing, among others. The School Improvement and Innovation Fund (SIIF) will award to about 4000 schools about 1700 grants ranging from US$1000 to US $3000. Schools and communities are encouraged to diagnose their own problems and define their own strategies, including the indigenization of materials and curriculum. Efforts are being made to ensure that funds flow more directly to the division, district, or, in some cases, the schools. Local offices will be trained in budget management. Under the School Building Program, TEEP will build 6300 new classrooms and replace 2850 existing ones. Construction is to be delegated to the selected municipalities in keeping with the devolution of local school construction and maintenance. Finally, TEEP will support the setting up of small multigrade schools in the 26 priority provinces in areas that can be reached in less than an hour's walk from home. In these provinces it will also finance a science and a reading corner for each classroom and fund production of teaching-learning packages for multigrade teachers and pupils to equalize the quality of instruction between these and monograde schools.

These four projects have been implemented to address the continuing concern over the quality and accessibility of education in the Philippines. Further information on The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports can be obtained by writing Dr. Lidinila Luis Santos, Director, Bureau of Elementary Education, DECS, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines.

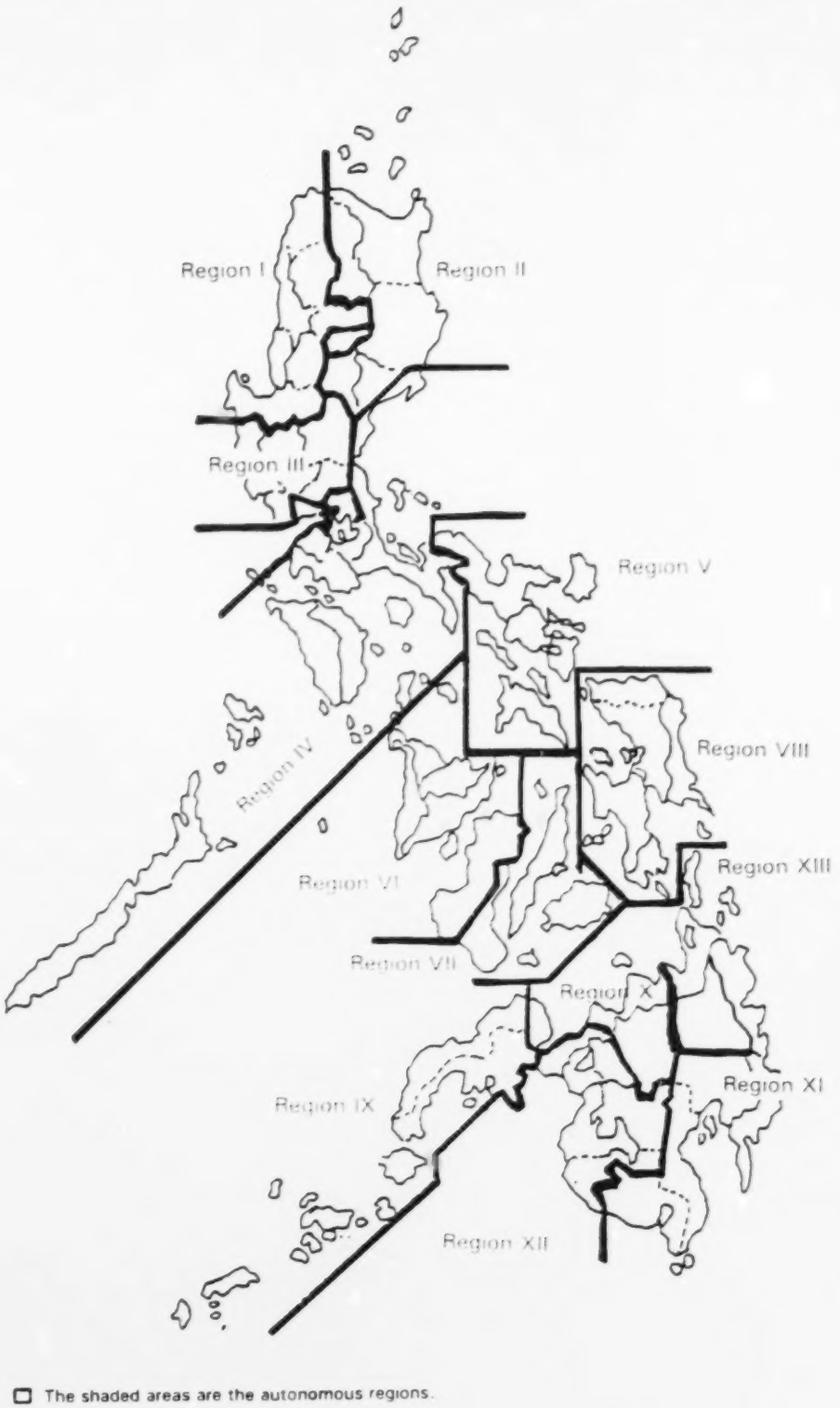
TABLE II.

National Summary
Number of Teachers Handling
Multigrade Classes per Cluster Type
As Of SY 1996-1997

REGION	No. of Teachers per Cluster Type					TOTAL
	2 Grades	3 Grades	4 Grades	5 Grades	6 Grades	
I	1048	98	14	1	1	1162
II	1485	100	29	2	0	1616
III	704	37	6	0	0	747
IV	1715	427	51	2	27	2222
V	1779	174	9	4	0	1966
VI	1171	59	24	2	0	1256
VII	1828	108	14	1	0	1951
VIII	1978	327	27	4	1	2337
IX	1409	114	35	2	3	1563
X	1140	81	23	1	0	1245
XI	845	130	27	1	9	1012
XII	687	47	30	3	2	769
CARAGA	1048	96	29	0	0	1173
CAR	687	39	3	0	0	729
ARMM	657	59	13	2	0	731
Total	18181	1896	334	25	43	20479

(NCR not shown)

APPENDIX A



Regional Map of the Philippines

(Not shown: Regions NCR, CAR, and ARMM)

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APPENDIX B

Characteristics of a Quality Education

Quality education is necessarily linked to the philosophy, vision and mission of education which describe the kind of people we would like to develop through education. Quality of education may therefore be defined by identifying the ideal characteristics or attributes of the desired output of the educational process. These characteristics include:

1. belief in God
2. love of country and people
3. pride in being Filipino and in one's culture and history
4. committed to conserving and developing the nations' resources
5. possessing indigenous and international values
6. proficient in Filipino and English
7. creative and critical thinkers and lifelong learners
8. capable of coping with changes in the environment and with competition.

Quality basic education may be defined as a process which promotes the development of these characteristics. It shall ensure the balanced development of the Filipino child in terms of modern skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy, character formation and physical development, mastery of fundamental learning skills, and preparation for tertiary studies and the world of work.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Education shall develop citizens who believe in God, love their country and fellowmen and actively participate in building a just Filipino society and in conserving and developing the nation's human and material resources.

VISION OF EDUCATION

We have seen the Filipino nation of the future in the best of the Filipino today. Nurturing, enhancing, and articulating the best in us today are the central tasks of education in the future.

This is our vision of education:

Its Aims

Education should develop the potentials of all individuals for achieving our common and shared national goals. It should develop all socially valuable talents of persons as its contribution

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to building a cohesive, peaceful, and progressive society.

From their educational experience, Filipinos should emerge as valued and respected participants in the global community, not because of lack of opportunity in their own country, but because of the world-class excellence of their abilities.

Its Content

The substance of education should draw upon our cultural and historical heritage yet enable us to create our preferred future. It should also endow us with the ever-growing knowledge resources of the world yet encourage us to contribute our share to that reservoir of knowledge.

The style of education should touch our feelings, expand our thinking and make our actions purposeful.

Through education we should confront our failings as a nation and community in order for us to truly rise above them.

The means for education will be constrained by the limitations of our economy and society, but these should also be propelled by our aspirations as a people. While we plan and work towards attainable goals, we should also reach plan and work towards for our highest aspirations.

Education should enable persons to meet their needs. It should equip people with the means to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves. It should also make people capable of outrage over injustice and evil, of conceiving a better world, and of doing good. Education should fortify our hearts, minds and bodies so that each succeeding generation continually work towards a better world.

Education should create opportunities for advancing our material welfare and develop wisdom toward inner peace.

Education should empower the weak and ennoble the strong. Despite our individual differences in means, motives, and prospects, education should challenge the most advanced, encourage those who lag behind and nurse those who are lost.

Education should heighten the joy and virtue of lifelong learning, and enable us to use learning for our well-being and fulfillment.

The Way to Realization

We shall continually work for a revolutionary breakthrough in achieving the aims of

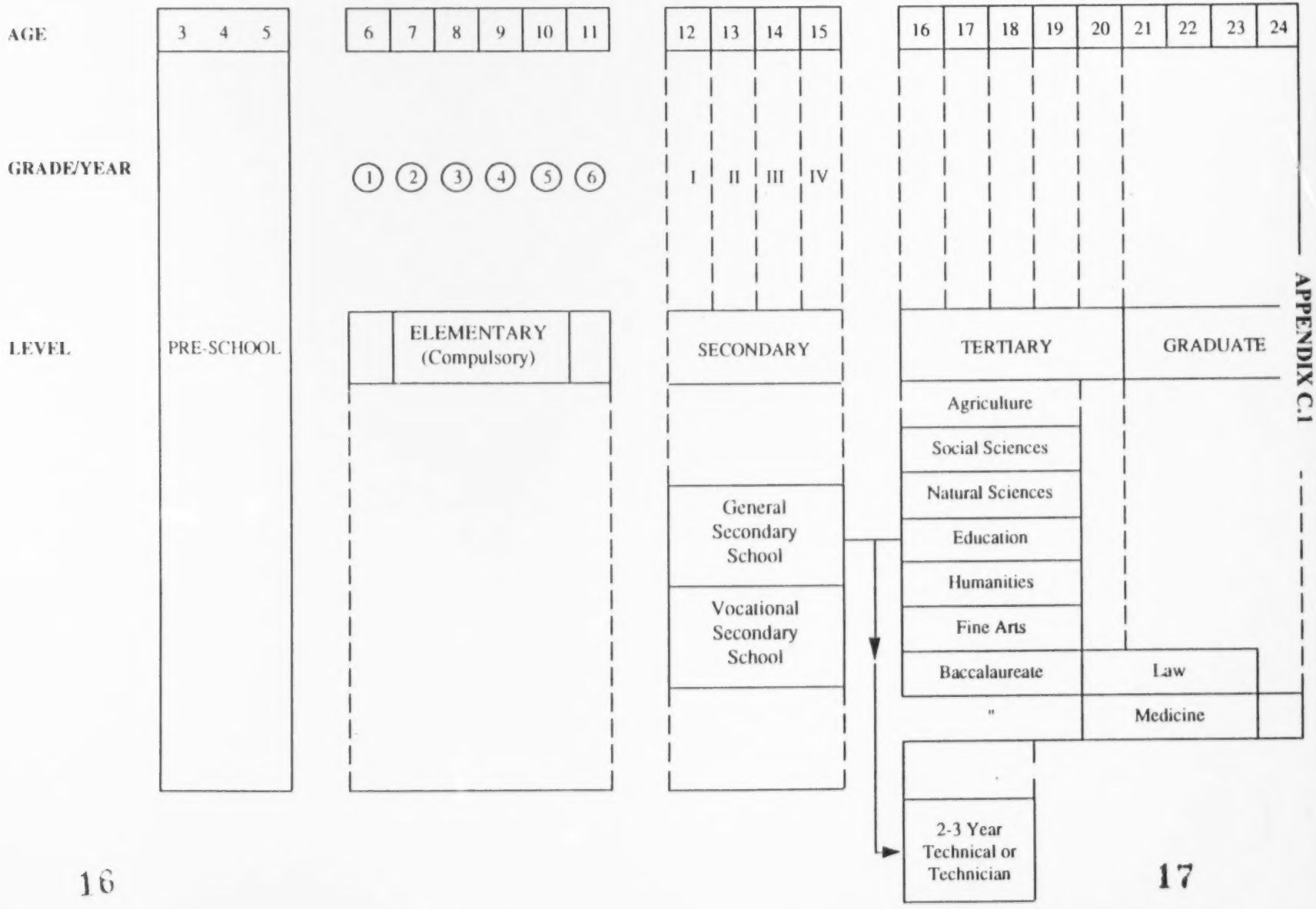
education in our land, but we shall retain a constancy of purpose as we evolve better ways of achieving them.

We shall transform our schools, homes, communities, and our whole society to become instruments as well as products of this vision of education.

MISSION

Basic education aims to provide universal access to quality and relevant education through formal, non-formal and informal channels. It shall develop in young Filipinos, including disadvantaged groups and children with special needs and in extremely difficult circumstances, the knowledge, habits, skills and attitudes necessary for active and successful participation in the economic, political, socio-cultural, spiritual and moral life in a just and humane society.

STRUCTURE OF THE FORMAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION – PHILIPPINES



APPENDIX C.1

APPENDIX C.2

GRADE ONE

CLASSROOM PROGRAM - SY 1996 - 1997

TIME	NO. OF MINS	I-1	I-2	I-3	I-4	I-5	I-6	I-7	I-8	I-9	I-10	I-11
6:20 - 6:40	20	EDUKASYONG PANGPALAKAS NG KATAWAN										
6:40 - 7:10	30	EDUKASYON SA WASTONG PAG-UUGALI										
7:10 - 8:10	60	FILIPINO	FILIPINO	MATH	FILIPINO	MATH	FILIPINO	MATH	MATH	FILIPINO	MATH	FILIPINO
8:10 - 8:50	40	ENGLISH	SIBIKA	ENGLISH	SCIENCE	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	SCIENCE	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	SIBIKA
8:50 - 9:30	40		SCIENCE		SIBIKA			SIBIKA				SCIENCE
9:30 - 9:40	10	R E C E S S										
9:40 - 10:40	60	MATH	MATH	FILIPINO	MATH	FILIPINO	MATH	FILIPINO	FILIPINO	MATH	FILIPINO	MATH
10:40 - 11:20	40	SCIENCE	ENGLISH	SIBIKA	ENGLISH	SIBIKA	SCIENCE	ENGLISH	SIBIKA	SCIENCE	SIBIKA	ENGLISH
11:20 - 12:00	40	SIBIKA		SCIENCE		SCIENCE	SIBIKA		SCIENCE	SIBIKA	SCIENCE	
Teaching Load	340	340	340	340	340	340	340	340	340	340	340	340

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APPENDIX D

The BEST Training Program

The following is a list developed by a needs assessment (BEST - Better English for Students and Teachers) conducted by the Staff Development Division of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports.

1. Developing English proficiency
    - Grammar usage/structure
        - Subject-verb agreement
        - Verb tenses
        - Prepositions
    - Oral reading proficiency/pronunciation skills
        - Stress, blending, phrasing, juncture,
        - pitch, intonation,
        - rhythm (first language interference)
        - Emotional expression
    - Reading comprehension skills
    - Reading study skills
    - Vocabulary skills
        - Transactional, negotiating and personal skills
        - Use of appropriate filters

2. The art of questioning

3. Reading and language learning strategies
    - Framing, focusing, initiating the lesson
    - Skill integration (application to real-life experiences)
    - Creativity
    - Interactive process

4. Lesson delivery
    - Interaction process
    - Feedbacking

5. Attitudinal change

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